

HARVARD COLLEGE OBSERVATORY
CAMBRIDGE 38, MASSACHUSETTS

September 23, 1958

Professor Joshua Lederberg
Genetics Building
University of Wisconsin
Madison 6, Wisconsin

Dear Professor Lederberg:

I have only just come back from abroad, and am replying to your letter of June 23rd, concerning the question of lunar dust. I wrote an article on this subject in the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society, of which I am enclosing a copy.

I think I read something in a journal recently about the question of a biological investigation of the lunar surface and the risk of the contamination of the Moon by terrestrial material brought up in rockets. A rapid calculation will show, however, that all the biological material that might accidentally be carried up in even quite a large number of rockets that may explode and scatter themselves near the Moon would still not produce a biological contamination that would result in a remote chance of showing up on an arbitrary sample of the lunar surface taken at a later time. I cannot believe that any kind of precautions are necessary, and hope that no such greatly over-cautious policies will be allowed to interfere with lunar experimentation. If you have any other views on this, I should be glad to hear them.

Yours sincerely,



T. Gold
Professor of Astronomy

TG:mad
Enclosure